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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

[0051] An example of a portrayal of an actual gaming environment is illustrated in Figure 1.

As illustrated, the gaming system includes gaming system devices such as gaming machines 49a,b,c arranged in a first bank 50 of gaming devices. An isle 52 [53] separates the first bank 50 of gaming devices from a second bank 54 of gaming devices. An isle 54 also separates the first bank 50 of gaming devices from a number of other gaming devices including a Blackjack table 56 and a Roulette wheel 58. Again, these displayed images correspond to an actual (in this case, exemplary) physical gaming environment.

[0098] A variety of methods have been described above which, as indicated, may be implemented via the virtual information host 36. In general, embodiments of the invention can be implemented as computer software in the form of computer readable code executed on a general purpose computer such as a virtual information host having the form of a computing device configured as illustrated in Figure 4, or in the form of bytecode class files executable within a JAVA™ language [Java™] runtime environment running on such a computer, or in the form of bytecodes running on a processor (or devices enabled to process bytecodes) existing in a distributed environment (e.g., one or more processors on a network).

[0102] As described above and illustrated in Figure 2, in one embodiment, the host 36 is in communication with one or more devices of the gaming system 22. The host 36 thus preferably includes a communication interface 120 which is coupled to the system bus 118. The

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communication interface 120 provides a two-way data communication coupling via a network link 121 to the local network 122. For example, if the communication interface 120 is an integrated services digital network (ISDN) card or a modem, the communication interface 120 provides a data communication connection to the corresponding type of telephone line, which comprises part of the network link 121. If the communication interface 120 is a local area network (LAN) card, the communication interface 120 provides a data communication connection via network link 121 to a compatible LAN. The communication interface 120 may have a variety of architectures and utilize a variety of protocols such as IEEE-1394 (known under the trademark FIREWIRE™ belonging to Apple, Inc. [FireWire™]) or Ethernet in the case where the link 121 is a wired link, or 802.11b or the BLUETOOTH™ communication protocol [Bluetooth™] in the case of a wireless link. In any such implementation, the communication interface 120 sends and receives electrical, electromagnetic or optical signals which carry digital data streams representing various types of information.

A3